

# REGISTER OF CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS

Date of entry in Register: 06 October 1999  
 Name of applicant/court: Paul Schwabe  
 Applicant to the Labelling Body: Not Applicable  
 Title of Publication: Austin Powers The Spy Who Shagged Me  
 Other Known Titles: Austin Powers 2, Austin Powers II  
 Director: Jay Roach  
 Producers: Suzanne Todd, Jennifer Todd, Demi Moore, Eric McLeod, John Lyons, Mike Myers  
 Publisher: Not Applicable  
 Author: Not Applicable  
 Format: Film 35mm  
 Country of Origin: USA  
 Language: English

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**Components of film originally examined:**

Feature:	Austin Powers The Spy Who Shagged Me	Running time:	94.58
Trailers:	Nil	Running time:	
		Total Running time:	94.58

Excision/Alteration: No.

Reason(s) for Excision:

Not Applicable.

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Classification Decision:

Unrestricted: Suitable for mature audiences 16 years of age and over.

Display Conditions:

Not Applicable.

Descriptive Note:

Contains sexual references.

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Direction to issue a label has been given on: 04 October 1999

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**SUMMARY OF THE REASONS FOR DECISION:**

The publication entitled *Austin Powers The Spy Who Shagged Me* also known as *Austin Powers 2* and *Austin Powers II* has been classified as:  
Unrestricted: Suitable for mature audiences 16 years of age and over.

The publication was given a classification rating of M by the Labelling Body on 8 June 1999 with a consumer note of 'contains sexual references'. Leave was given by the Acting Chief Censor to submit the publication for classification under s13(1)(c) of the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 (FVPC Act) on 26 August 1999, following an application from a member of the public. The main points of issue concerned the word 'shagged' in the title and the use of this word in the film and the effect of the word on children.

The publication is a commercially released American film which is a sequel to a film entitled *Austin Powers International Man Of Mystery*. This sequel is a comedy which uses a wide range of comic genres. It contains adult themes of sexual prowess while mining humour from coarse behaviour and language. It also depicts the infliction of serious physical harm to a low extent, medium degree and in a comic manner. These depictions involve serious and considerable injury to individuals whose survival provides a surreal quality to the film.

The Classification Office considers that the most contentious issue raised by the film is the use of the word 'shagged' in the title and throughout the narrative. It is accepted that the word is used to refer to sexual intercourse. In rating the publication in accordance with these issues the Classification Office considers that the publication has been clearly labelled as suitable for mature audiences and contains sexual references. As such it becomes a matter of personal choice for any member of the public who wishes to attend the film. The exercise of parental discretion is also available in determining the appropriateness of this film for children and young persons.

Evidence that the word 'shagged' has more meanings in New Zealand than sexual intercourse has been obtained. The claim that the word degrades women is considered to be a subjective one. The word is familiar in the New Zealand context and while it still retains a sexual meaning, the other meanings of the word reduce any implied gender weighting to its usage. The concerns about the effect of the word on children are accepted. The recent survey by the New Zealand Broadcasting Standards Authority of New Zealanders' ranking of offensive language did not place 'shagged' among the first 22 words. Some of the words on this list have the same or similar meaning and are frequently heard in modern media entertainments. It is considered that greater injury to society would occur from regular exposure to words on this list than the use of the word 'shagged' in this publication.

The Classification Office is not empowered to restrict the availability of publications due to level of offence. In this instance the level of offence attached to the word 'shagged' is considered insufficient to be seen as being injurious to the public good. The provisions of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 (NZBR Act) have been considered and balanced against the provisions in the FVPC Act in order to allow the widest possible availability of the publication consistent with law. A restricted classification on this publication is considered to be against the intention of the law, in particular the freedom of expression set out in s14 of the NZBR Act.

OFLC Ref: 9901685